

Language of the Buddha

What greatly attracts me to the Buddha is the civilized concern which he shows for the temperate use of language.

For him a right way of speaking is one of the strands in the eightfold path leading to enlightenment and the end of suffering.

To attain this right way all lies, all bitter and double-tongued words, all idle babbling, must be avoided.

So equally must harsh abusive speech, arrogant usage heeding only itself, and crude expression tending to corrupt.

Style also is important, and bombastic inflated language is condemned no less than gentility and plausible fine words.

Above all the Buddha values restraint with words, knowing that silence is often more expressive than the finished poem.

An Old Man

An old man with a large white beard and long white hair, but with the body of a young athlete, wades slowly into the Ganges. When it reaches his waist with closed eyes he quietly utters a mantra, gently places half a coco-nut filled with marigolds upon the water, then stands gazing inwardly watching them drift away.

-- Raymond Tong

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